

June 7, 2013

Hon. Kimba A. Wood,
Senior U.S. District Judge
500 Pearl Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Wood:

In this letter, I will try my very best to explain to Your Honor how it is I come to be standing before the court facing a sentence for the crimes to which I pleaded guilty. First, I realize all too clearly how terribly wrong I was. You should also know, respectfully, that I reject violence and any interpretation of Islam that would condone or approve of violent or terrorist acts. The fact that I stand to lose a significant portion of my adult years, my children's growing up years, and the simple opportunity to participate in the affairs of a free society is my fault and my fault alone. I blame no one else. What I have done to the lives of those whom I love and those who love me is unspeakable and I am amazed they continue to stand by me. Such a simple passage of life as being unable to attend my grandfather's funeral hurts.

I was born in the Republic of China in 1976. My people are an Islamic ethnic minority within China known as "Uighurs." My

grandparents were originally from Uzbekistan, which was then a part of the Soviet Union, and fled to China in the 1940's to escape the oppression of the Stalin era. They were business people who ran a factory manufacturing candy. My parents were both also born in China.

In 1980, when I was three-years old, my immediate family, consisting of my mother, father, and sister, took advantage of a United Nations Refugee program and we all moved to Australia. Later on, we were joined there by my paternal grandmother and other extended family members. Members of my mother's side of the family moved to New York. I presently hold dual Australian and United States citizenship.

I remained in Australia with my family until I was 12 or 13. I learned English and now speak English, Uighur and Uzbeki. We moved to the United States in approximately 1989. My father worked in a slaughterhouse for halal products and my mother worked in a plastics factory. My grandfather opened a newsstand in Brooklyn. My parents still operate that newsstand 12-14 hours per day.

My wife, who was born in 1979, originally left Uzbekistan for Afghanistan, where her parents were from. During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, she fled again to Pakistan and then to the United States. She was three-years old at the time. She grew up in Flushing and then moved, with her family,

to Long Island. Her father drove a taxi. She and I were married on August 23, 2001.

I went to college in Manhattan, at Baruch, where I earned a degree in accounting. attended the

and earned a Bachelor's Degree in fashion design. She worked in the fashion industry until we started a family. We now have three children, who is 9, who is 6, and who is almost 3. was born after my arrest prematurely and has been diagnosed with developmental delay issues.

In 2003 I earned my CPA and went to work for major accounting firms, including KPMG in New York and Price Waterhouse Coopers in both New York City and then Dubai. At the time of my arrest, I was employed as the Chief Financial Officer for Rostamani, a large company based in Dubai. I made a good living and my family and I enjoyed a very comfortable lifestyle.

And then, for reasons that I still have trouble confronting, I threw that all away. Because of my stupidity I will miss many of my children's milestones. I was not able to attend the funerals of my beloved grandfather and father-in-law. I have let down members of my family and have brought shame to my community. I cannot express to Your Honor how much I enjoyed, and how much pride I took, in simply being a father to my children and a loving husband and partner to my wife. To see them once every two weeks, for an hour, and to see the children growing up

without me tears me apart. All the more so because I know whose fault that is.

At the time "this" all started in around 2007, I was trying harder and harder to connect with my Muslim faith and to reconcile that faith with what I saw as atrocities committed against Muslims around the world. As best I can explain it, a sense of guilt at living a comfortable life, and not somehow acting on my beliefs and standing up for fellow Muslims, led me, step-by-step, to start making plans to go and fight for my faith and my community. I was certainly influenced by radical clerics, and sermons by people such as the American, Anwar Alaki, but I made my own decisions.

As I said earlier, I blame no one for this but myself. I am glad of only one thing, that it got no further than it did. Violence is no answer. I completely renounce any view of Islam that says that violent jihad is in any way acceptable.

At some point, as Your Honor knows, I learned that the people overseas in with whom we were dealing - supposedly representatives of a jihadi group - wanted me to do "surveillance" of targets in the United States. There was no way I was ever going to assist or become involved in an act of terrorism - my goal, misguided as it was, was to fight in a war zone and, perhaps, die in the process. I viewed this request for "intelligence" as a "test" of my commitment that would determine

whether these people would in fact assist me in reaching my goal of fighting abroad. I did supply the people with some very basic information about the NYSE but deliberately provided nothing beyond what anyone could have learned from GoogleEarth, a tourist map or a brochure. I was never going to provide anything useful and, had I been pressed for more, would have said no. In fact, there was no further discussion of surveillance of the NYSE or any other U.S. tourist sites after August 2008, when that incident occurred, which was about 20 months before my arrest.

I understand the need for punishing me and for deterring others from doing what I did. For the past three years I have tried to prove myself by maintaining a clear conduct record at the MCC.

Just this week I learned from the government's letter to the Court that [redacted] had been killed while fighting on behalf of the Muhajireen Brigade in Syria. I also saw the photo of him in death that was attached to the letter. [redacted]'s death brought home to me powerfully the ultimate consequences of what I was considering, and the impact on my family.

I know you are going to sentence me to time in prison, and I have to live with the fact that I am responsible for doing that to my family. But, when I think that I was making any effort towards possibly putting myself in [redacted]'s position, I am relieved that I was arrested. I am so glad my actions never went

that far.

As you contemplate my sentence, I ask that you think of my family and that you accept my sincere apologies for my actions.

Respectfully yours,

Sabirhan Hasanoff